

**PRELIMINARY PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT  
MARCH 2, 2010**

**AGRICULTURE ELEMENT  
POLICY 20**

**AGP20: Agricultural Land Divisions.**

- a. Where a division of agricultural lands is proposed, a contiguous cluster division consistent with AGP 22 ~~or 23~~ is an alternative to a conventional "lot split" land division.**
- b. Where a land division is proposed, the proposed parcels should be designed to ensure the long term protection of agricultural resources.**

**Discussion:** Where lands can qualify for subdivision based on the parcel size criteria described in AGP 21, the use of agricultural cluster divisions consistent with AGP 22 ~~and 23~~ may be the preferred alternative over the conventional "lot split" land divisions. Agricultural cluster divisions provide a way to protect lands for continued and enhanced agricultural production, particularly if the ~~homes~~ parcels are clustered in a compact, contiguous manner which reduces the agricultural/residential interface. The creation of such residential sized parcels as well as the bonus agricultural parcel provides incentives to the land owner to choose the cluster approach. In return, areas of the site intended for agricultural production are permanently protected by a recorded agricultural open space easement, as well as being placed in a Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) contract that will provide long term protection of the agricultural resources.

When any division of agricultural land is proposed, the county Agriculture Department should carefully review the proposal. The primary concern should be that the resulting parcels will maintain the land resources, so they will have a strong likelihood of remaining in long-term sustainable agriculture.

~~To encourage the use of a cluster design, there should be an increase in the number of parcels that will provide a sufficient incentive to the land owner to choose the cluster approach. In return for that increase, areas of the site intended for agricultural production are permanently protected by a recorded open space easement, as well as being placed in a Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) contract that will provide long term protection of the agricultural resources.~~

There will be circumstances where a land owner proposes a conventional division of agricultural land and does not wish to create residential cluster parcels and accomplish an increase in the number of parcels, or the owner believes the conventional design best meets the agricultural goals for the property. For such a project, the Agriculture Department's review should include consideration of designated building envelopes, as well as a possible limitation on the number of residences and allowed uses that can be established on the proposed parcels. Since the proposed parcels would also be reviewed against the criteria found in Figure 2-2, the resulting parcels would qualify for an agricultural preserve (Williamson Act) contract for further protection of the agricultural resources.

Other agricultural or conservation easements on the agricultural portions of the proposed parcels should also be considered to ensure long term protection of resources in perpetuity.

**Implementation:**

1. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO and CZLUO to implement this policy.

**Timeframe:** Concurrent with the adoption of this revised policy.

2. During the CEQA-required environmental review of discretionary land divisions, where the land contains sensitive environmental features and involves active agricultural production or has the potential for agricultural production, the value of the environmental resources should be weighed against the value of agricultural production.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing through the review of development projects.